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ABSTRACT

In 1996, the Office of Grants and Contracts at Nova Southeastern University (Florida) began a reporting process to determine the extent of constituent satisfaction with its services. This study, performed in the year 2000, repeated the established reporting process. The invited sample of 532 included full-time faculty, administrators, selected contacts, principal investigators, and contract officers. The return rate was 16% (85 of 532), which is generally in parity with the 14% return rate from the 1996 survey. The Office of Grants and Contracts provides a variety of consulting, coordination, and management services to faculty and administrators, and respondents to this survey provided a positive assessment of these services. Because the return rate was low, it may be useful for the Office of Grants and Contracts to explore further means of communicating about the types of services offered. It is likely that the core constituency of faculty and administrators who use these services is very satisfied. (Contains 10 tables and 5 references.) (SLD)

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FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY RESPOND TO A WINTER TERM 2000 OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Thomas W. MacFarland

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Nova Southeastern University
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Report 00-12

July 2000

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FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY RESPOND TO A WINTER TERM 2000 OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Thomas W. MacFarland **Senior Research Associate**
Report 00-12 **July 2000**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nova Southeastern University's Office of Grants and Contracts was formed in 1994, by joining related offices soon after the 1994 merger of Nova University and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences. The Office of Grants and Contracts provides a variety of pre-award services and post-award services for sponsored funding from government and non-government sources for research, teaching/training, and community service projects. The Office of Grants and Contracts provides a public listing of recent awards and the office also has a role in coordinating activities related to the University's *Institutional Review Board Policy and Procedure Manual for Research with Human Subjects*.

In 1996, the Office of Grants and Contracts consulted with the University's Office of Research and Planning regarding the preparation of a report that would help satisfy the Office of Grants and Contracts' contribution to the University's Institutional Effectiveness process, as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The purpose of this study was to repeat this established reporting process, now focusing on a more current assessment of constituent satisfaction with the University's Office of Grants and Contracts.

The invited sample (N = 532) for this study included full-time faculty, administrators, and selected contacts and principal investigators and/or project directors. The 1996 survey process provided evidence that many full-time faculty members were unaware of the services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts. Therefore, all full-time faculty were included in the invited sample, as a means of communicating with these individuals about the services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

The Office of Research and Planning used interoffice mail to distribute the survey on April 25, 2000, with May 9, 2000 identified as the last date for survey return. The survey return rate was 16 percent (85/532), which was generally in parity with the 14 percent return rate from the 1996 survey. Survey participants were directed to limit responses to services received in the last 12 months. It was judged that this time-oriented exclusion had a possible impact on the percentage of survey return, but that there was an acceptable percentage of survey return by the Office of Grants and Contracts' core constituency. .

Respondents were offered a variety of selections in regard to their individual reasons for pursuing external funding. The leading reason was *Desire to complete a particular project* (45.9 percent response). The leading response for level of use of pre-award services was *Assistance*

with budget preparation (35.3 percent use) and the leading response for level of use of post-award services was *Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers* (25.9 percent use).

Respondents also had the opportunity to respond to a series (N = 27) of Likert-type statements (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied). Nearly 93 percent of all statements (25/27) had a Median rating of 4 and all statements had a Mean rating that exceeded 3.0. The Modal rating of the statement *What is your overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts?* was 5.

The University's Office of Grants and Contracts provides a variety of consulting, coordination, and management services to faculty and administrators and the respondents to this survey process provided a positive assessment of the services provided by the University's Office of Grants and Contracts. However, because of the survey return rate for this and the 1996 assessment process, it may be useful for the Office of Grants and Contracts to explore further means of communicating the types of services offered. It is likely that the core constituency of faculty and administrators who use these services are very satisfied, but there are many members of the University community who have not used these services recently (at least in the last 12 months) and they in turn did not respond to this survey process.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Nova Southeastern University's Office of Grants and Contracts was formed in 1994, by joining related offices soon after the 1994 merger of Nova University and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences. As identified in the *Description of Services* (2000):

> [The Office of Grants and Contracts] serves as the central point through which all proposals for sponsored funding from government and non-government sources for research, teaching/training, and community service projects and programs are coordinated, managed and administered. The office provides service and support to all of the University's academic units throughout the pre- and post-award grant and contract phases.

Along with ad hoc requests for services, the Office of Grants and Contracts specifically provides a variety of focused pre-award functions and post-award functions (*Description of Services*, 2000):

Pre-award Activities

- Creation and maintenance of a sponsored project administration library
- Knowledge of faculty interests and areas of expertise
- Identification of funding sources
- Liaison with funding sources
- Assistance with identification and conceptualization of projects/programs
- Assistance with preparation of preproposal or proposal
- Assistance with budget preparation
- Review and submission of proposals
- Completion of assurances/certifications
- Resolution of compliance issues
- Negotiation and acceptance of award.

Post-Award Activities

- Assistance to the principal investigators in award administration
- Interpretation of agency rules, regulations, guidelines, etc.
- Maintenance of proper fiscal management, in conjunction with the Office of the Controller
- Preparation of contracts for subrecipients and amendments
- Preparation or assistance with the preparation of all funding agency reports, as required, in conjunction with the principal investigator and/or the Office of the Controller

- Participation in audits

The Office of Grants and Contracts provides a public listing of recent awards (*NSU New Grant and Contract Awards for May 2000*, 2000) and the office also has a role in coordinating activities related to the University's *Institutional Review Board Policy and Procedure Manual for Research with Human Subjects* (2000).

Purpose of This Study

In 1996, the Office of Grants and Contracts consulted with the University's Office of Research and Planning regarding the preparation of a report (*Faculty and Administrators at Nova Southeastern University Respond to an Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey*, 1996) that would help satisfy the Office of Grants and Contracts' contribution to the University's Institutional Effectiveness process, as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (*Criteria for Accreditation*; 1998, pp. 19-22). The purpose of this study was to repeat this established reporting process, now focusing on a more current assessment of constituent satisfaction with the University's Office of Grants and Contracts.

METHODOLOGY

During Winter Term 2000, the Office of Grants and Contracts worked with the University's Office of Research and Planning in regard to survey instrumentation and distribution, using the 1996 survey instrument and distribution process as a model. The individuals selected for this survey (N = 532) included:

- Academic center deans
- Full-time faculty
- Selected departmental contacts
- Grants and contracts accounting staff
- Any remaining principal investigators and/or project directors excluded from the prior listings

Many members of the invited sample, either at the current time or in the past, have been involved with the Office of Grants and Contracts in some phase of the pre/post-award grant/contract process. Additionally, the 1996 survey process provided evidence that many full-time faculty members were unaware of the services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts. Therefore, all full-time faculty were included in the invited sample as a means of communicating with these individuals about the services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

The Office of Research and Planning used interoffice mail to distribute the survey on April 25, 2000, with May 9, 2000 identified as the last date for survey return. The survey return rate was

16 percent (85/532), which was generally in parity with the 14 percent return rate from the 1996 survey. Again in reference to the 1996 survey process, it is useful to recall that survey participants were directed to limit responses to services received in the last 12 months. It was previously judged that this time-oriented exclusion had a possible impact on the percentage of survey return, but that there was an acceptable percentage of survey return by the Office of Grants and Contracts' core constituency (*Faculty and Administrators at Nova Southeastern University Respond to an Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey*; 1996, p. 2).

RESULTS

A set of tables is attached to this report. Details about the representation of the responding sample are presented in Tables 1 to 4:

- Nearly two-thirds of all respondents were members of the University's faculty (Table 1).
- Slightly more than one-half of all respondents were female (Table 2).
- Over one-third of all respondents were associated with the University's Health Professions Division (Table 3).
- With a range of 1 to 25 years, respondents had a modal response of 3 years of employment at the University (Table 4).

As detailed in Table 5, respondents were offered a variety of selections in regard to their individual reasons for pursuing external funding. In rank order, the five leading responses were:

Reasons for Pursuing External Funding	**% Response**
Desire to complete a particular project	45.9
Gain recognition for your department/center/institution	40.0
Availability of funds	37.6
Provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, other institutions, organizations, etc.	36.5
Provide opportunities for publishing	30.6

Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of use of pre-award services (Table 6) and post-award services (Table 7). In rank order, the five leading responses for each level of service were:

Pre-Award Service	% Use
Assistance with budget preparation	35.3
Received program announcements, Requests for Proposals (RFPs)	34.1
Assistance with completion of required assurances/ compliances	30.6
Assistance with proposal preparation (i.e., provided "boilerplate" information, writing, editing)	27.1
Mail or hand-delivery of proposal	20.0

Post-Award Service	% Use
Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers	25.9
Assistance with project continuation/closeout	18.8
Liaison with university accounting department	17.6
General assistance with grant/contract project management	16.5
Expenditure approval	16.5
Liaison with funding agency on my behalf	16.5

Respondents also had the opportunity to respond to a series (N = 27) of Likert-type statements (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied), as reported in Tables 8 to 10. Nearly 93 percent of all statements (25/27) had a Median rating of 4 and all statements had a Mean rating that exceeded 3.0. The Modal rating of the statement *What is your overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts?* was 5.

SUMMARY

The University's Office of Grants and Contracts provides a variety of consulting, coordination, and management services to faculty and administrators. The respondents to this survey process provided a positive assessment of the services provided by the University's Office of Grants and Contracts.

However, because of the survey return rate for this and the 1996 assessment process, it may be useful for the Office of Grants and Contracts to explore further means of communicating the

types of services offered. It is likely that the core constituency of faculty and administrators who use these services are very satisfied, but there are many members of the University community who have not used these services recently (at least in the last 12 months) and they in turn did not respond to this survey process.

REFERENCES

Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (1998). *Criteria for Accreditation*. Decatur, Georgia.

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Institutional Review Board Policy and Procedure Manual for Research with Human Subjects. (2000). URL <http://www.nova.edu/cwis/ogc/irb.html>. Accessed July 11, 2000.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

Representation of the Responding Sample by Job Category

Job Category	N	%
Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean	5	5.9
Academic department chairperson or director	8	9.4
Faculty member	57	67.1
Other	11	12.9
Unidentified	4	4.7
Total	85	100

Table 2

Representation of the Responding Sample by Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	38	44.7
Female	44	51.8
Unidentified	3	3.5
Total	85	100

Table 3

Representation of the Responding Sample by Academic Center or Administrative Unit

Academic Center or Administrative Unit	N	%
School of Psychology	6	7.1
Center for Undergraduate Studies	4	4.7
Family and School Center	7	8.2
Fischler Graduate School of Education	9	10.6
Health Professions Division	33	38.8
Law Center	7	8.2
Oceanography	6	7.1
Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship	3	3.5
School of Computer and Information Sciences	2	2.4
School of Social and Systemic Studies	3	3.5
Academic Center Subtotal	80	94.1
Administrative Units	0	0.0
Unidentified	5	5.9
Total	85	100

Table 4

Years Employed at NSU

Measure of Central Tendency	Statistic
Responding N	56
$Mode_{(Years)}$	3
$Median_{(Years)}$	5
$Mean_{(Years)}$	6.7
$SD_{(Years)}$	5.8
$Range_{(Years)}$	1 to 25

Table 5

Reasons for Pursuing External Funding

Statement	N	% Response
Availability of funds	32	37.6
Desire to complete a particular project	39	45.9
Gain recognition for your department/center/institution	34	40.0
Assistance from the Office of Grants and Contracts in the development of the proposal	10	11.8
Encouraged by the Office of Grants and Contracts	6	7.1
Encouraged by your supervisor	15	17.6
Encourage by your colleagues	13	15.3
Receive recognition in university publications	5	5.9
Receive other forms of public recognition	10	11.8
Provide opportunities for publishing	26	30.6
Provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, other institutions, organizations, etc.	31	36.5
Obtain resources to fund travel, acquire equipment, and/or provide personnel support	25	29.4
Other	8	9.4

Table 6

Frequency of Use of Pre-Award Services

Pre-Award Service	N	% Use
Used grant and contract library resources	5	5.9
Participated in grant development workshops	8	9.4
Received program announcements, Requests for Proposals (RFPs)	29	34.1
Received application forms	14	16.5
Funding search(es)	8	9.4
Liaison with funding agency in my behalf	13	15.3
Assistance with project conceptualization	10	11.8
Attendance of Office of Grants and Contracts staff at funding agency technical assistance workshop	1	1.2
Assistance with proposal preparation (i.e., provided "boilerplate" information, writing, editing)	23	27.1
Assistance with budget preparation	30	35.3
Assistance with completion of required assurances/ compliances	26	30.6
Assistance with special requirements (i.e., human subjects-IRB, animal subjects)	9	10.6
Assistance with special approvals (i.e. subcontracts, consultant agreements)	16	18.8
Assistance with copying and collating final document	15	17.6
Coordination of proposal review and approval	12	14.1
Mail or hand-delivery of proposal	17	20.0
Other	0	0

Table 7

Frequency of Use of Post-Award Services

Post-Award Service	N	% Use
Assistance with award negotiation	7	8.2
Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel	11	12.9
General assistance with grant/contract project management	14	16.5
Liaison with funding agency on my behalf	14	16.5
Liaison with university accounting department	15	17.6
Liaison with human resources with respect to grant/contract hiring/staffing on my behalf	6	7.1
Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers	22	25.9
Assistance with development of subcontracts	12	14.1
Assistance with the use of consultants	7	8.2
Expenditure approval	14	16.5
Assistance with project continuation/closeout	16	18.8
Other	1	1.2

Table 8

Assessment[1] of Resources and Services Offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts

Statement	N	Mode	Median	Mean	SD
Grant and contract library resources ...	18	4	4	3.8	0.9
Grant development workshops	21	4	4	3.7	0.9
Office of Grants and Contracts Quarterly Newsletter	41	4	4	3.4	1.1
Program announcements, Requests for Proposals	46	5	4	3.9	1.1
Office of Grants and Contracts Web Site	36	3	4	3.6	1.1
Office of Grants and Contracts Policy and Procedure Manual	36	4	4	3.6	1.0
Funding search(es)	23	3	4	3.6	0.9
Liaison with funding agency	27	5	4	3.9	1.1
Assistance with project conceptualization	21	3	3	3.5	1.2
Assistance with proposal preparation ..	34	5	4	4.0	1.1
Assistance with budget preparation	43	5	4	4.0	1.0
Assistance with completion of required assurances/compliances	39	5	4	4.3	0.8
Assistance with special requirements (i.e. human subjects, animal subjects)	18	5	4	3.9	1.1
Assistance with special approvals (i.e., subcontracts, consultant agreements) ...	29	5	4	4.3	1.1

[1] **Participants were instructed to use the following rating key:**

1	Very Dissatisfied	4	Satisfied
2	Dissatisfied	5	Very Satisfied
3	Neutral, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	NA	Not Applicable
		U	Unknown or Unable to Answer

Statement	N	Mode	Median	Mean	SD
Assistance with copying and collating final document	25	5	4	3.9	1.1
Coordination of proposal review and approval	23	5	4	3.7	1.4
Assistance with award negotiation	15	3	3	3.6	1.4
Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel	25	4	4	3.9	1.0
General assistance with grant/contract management	34	5	4	4.0	1.0
Budget revisions/carryovers	34	5	4	4.2	0.8
Expenditure approval	29	5	4	4.0	1.0
Assistance with project continuation/ closeout	31	5	4	4.1	0.9

Table 9

Assessment of Level of Service Offered by the Staff of the Office of Grants and Contracts

Statement	N	Mode	Median	Mean	SD
Courtesy of Office staff	60	5	4	4.4	1.0
Timeliness of response from Office staff	59	5	4	4.0	1.4
Availability of Office staff	60	5	4	4.1	1.2
Expertise/knowledge of Office staff . . .	59	5	4	4.0	1.2

Table 10

General Evaluation of the Office of Grants and Contracts

Statement	N	Mode	Median	Mean	SD
What is your overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts?	61	5	4	4.0	1.2

Memorandum

To: Selected Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

From: Tom MacFarland

Date: April 25, 2000

Subject: Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey

Attached is a Customer Satisfaction Survey developed by the Office of Grants and Contracts to obtain your judgments regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office's current services to users. Your candid responses will assist in identifying those areas in which performance is satisfactory, and those areas that need improvement.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey and return it to Laura Uslan in the Office of Research and Planning by Tuesday, May 9, 2000. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in completing this survey.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Please use Interoffice Mail to return this survey to:
RESEARCH AND PLANNING
Davie Campus
Attention: Laura Uslan
by May 9, 2000

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS (OGC)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
April - May 2000

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. PLEASE CHECK YOUR JOB CATEGORY:		*GENDER*	
Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean	_____	Male	_____
Academic department chairperson or director	_____		
Faculty member	_____	Female	_____
Other : _____			
Years Employed at NSU _____ Years			

2. PLEASE CHECK EITHER YOUR ACADEMIC CENTER OR YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT			
ACADEMIC CENTERS		**ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS**	
School of Psychology	_____	Academic Affairs	_____
Center for Undergraduate Studies	_____	Administration Office	_____
Family and School Center	_____	Financial Operations	_____
Fischler Graduate School of Education	_____	Human Resources	_____
Health Professions Division	_____	Institutional Advancement	_____
Law Center	_____	Research and Planning	_____
Oceanography	_____	Student Affairs	_____
Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship	_____	Other _____	_____
School of Computer and Information Sciences	_____		
School of Social and Systemic Studies	_____		

3. **Administrators and faculty seek external funding to support research, teaching/training, and community service projects for a variety of reasons. If you pursued external funding within the past 12 months, please check <u>all</u> of the following which influenced your decision to do so.**

___ Availability of funds
___ Desire to complete a particular project
___ Gain recognition for your department/center/institution
___ Assistance from the Office of Grants and Contracts in the development of the proposal
___ Encouraged by the Office of Grants and Contracts
___ Encouraged by your supervisor
___ Encouraged by your colleagues
___ Receive recognition in university publications
___ Receive other forms of public recognition
___ Provide opportunities for publishing
___ Provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, other institutions, organizations, etc.
___ Obtain resources to fund travel, acquire equipment, and/or provide personnel support
___ Other-please describe _____

_____

_____

4. **The Office of Grants and Contracts offers a variety of pre- and post-award services to administrators and faculty in the development and management of research, teaching/training, and community services grants and contracts supported through external funding.**

Pre-award Services—Please check all pre-award services you have used or received from the Office of Grants and Contracts in the last 12 months, regardless of whether or not your proposal was submitted or funded.

____ Used grant and contract library resources
____ Participated in grant development workshops
____ Received program announcements, Requests for Proposals (RFPs)
____ Received application forms
____ Funding search(es)
____ Liaison with funding agency in my behalf
____ Assistance with project conceptualization
____ Attendance of Office of Grants and Contracts staff at funding agency technical assistance workshop
____ Assistance with proposal preparation (i.e., provided "boilerplate" information, writing, editing)
____ Assistance with budget preparation
____ Assistance with completion of required assurances/compliances
____ Assistance with special requirements (i.e., human subjects-IRB, animal subjects)
____ Assistance with special approvals (i.e. subcontracts, consultant agreements)
____ Assistance with copying and collating final document
____ Coordination of proposal review and approval
____ Mail or hand-delivery of proposal
____ Other-please describe _____

_____

_____

Post-award Services—If you have received an externally funded grant or contract award within the last 12 months, please check all post-award services you have used or received from the Office of Grants and Contracts.

___ Assistance with award negotiation
___ Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel
___ General assistance with grant/contract project management
___ Liaison with funding agency on my behalf
___ Liaison with university accounting department
___ Liaison with human resources with respect to grant/contract hiring/staffing on my behalf
___ Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers
___ Assistance with development of subcontracts
___ Assistance with the use of consultants
___ Expenditure approval
___ Assistance with project continuation/closeout
___ Other-please describe _____

_____

RATING KEY			
1	Very Dissatisfied	4	Satisfied
2	Dissatisfied	5	Very Satisfied
3	Neutral, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	NA	Not Applicable
		U	Unknown or Unable to Answer

5. **As indicated above in Section 4, the Office of Grants and Contracts provides a variety of grant and contract pre- and post-award resources and services. Please indicate your assessment of the following resources and services by circling the appropriate number using the rating key above as a guide.**

Grant and contract library resources	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Grant development workshops	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Office of Grants & Contracts Quarterly Newsletter	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Program announcements, Requests for Proposals	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Office of Grants and Contracts Web Site	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Office of Grants and Contracts Policy and Procedure Manual	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U

RATING KEY			
1	Very Dissatisfied	4	Satisfied
2	Dissatisfied	5	Very Satisfied
3	Neutral. Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	NA	Not Applicable
		U	Unknown or Unable to Answer

Funding search(es)	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Liaison with funding agency	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with project conceptualization	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with proposal preparation	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with budget preparation	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with completion of required assurances/compliances	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with special requirements (i.e., human subjects, animal subjects)	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with special approvals (i.e. subcontracts, consultant agreements)	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with copying and collating final document	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Coordination of proposal review and approval	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with award negotiation	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
General assistance with grant/contract management	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Budget revisions/carryovers	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Expenditure approval	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Assistance with project continuation/closeout	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U

6. **From your experience working with the Office of Grants and Contracts, please provide your assessment of the level of service provided by the staff of the Office by circling the appropriate number using the rating key above as a guide.**

Courtesy of Office staff	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Timeliness of response from Office staff	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Availability of Office staff	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Expertise/knowledge of Office staff	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U

Comments _____

7. **General evaluation. Please circle the appropriate number using the rating key above as a guide**

What is your overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts?	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U

8. **General comments and suggestions** _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Please use Interoffice Mail to return this survey to:
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